AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A method of processing postal items in which an image is formed of each item, the image including address information (1), and on the basis of the image of the item and a reference address base (6), OCR is used to perform automatic recognition of the destination address information (8, 9), the method being characterized in that during automatic recognition of destination address information, use is made (10) of a database (11) in which there are organized ordered lists of delivery points for delivery rounds in such a manner as to take account of an estimated extra cost for destination error associated with processing the item should the item be delivered to an erroneous delivery point.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, in which taking account of the extra cost of destination error ~~consists in~~ comprises grouping together a set of destination address solutions for the item, in identifying delivery points corresponding respectively to said solutions (100), and in looking to see whether the identified delivery points form part of a single delivery round (101).

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, in which taking account of the extra cost of destination error ~~consist~~ comprise, in the event of the identified delivery points all

forming part of a single delivery round, in determining a volume of mail in the delivery range corresponding to the delivery points identified for said delivery round.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, in which taking account of the extra cost of destination error ~~consists in~~ comprises grouping together a set of destination address solutions for the item, in identifying delivery points corresponding respectively to said solutions, in identifying delivery rounds corresponding respectively to said delivery points, and in identifying delivery offices corresponding respectively to said delivery rounds, and on the basis of the delivery points, the delivery rounds, and the delivery offices as identified in this way, in searching (102) amongst the destination address solutions, for that solution which minimizes the extra cost of destination error associated with processing the item in the event of it being delivered by a wrong delivery office, and/or in a wrong delivery round, and/or to a wrong delivery point.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, in which a first item of numerical information (C_1) is defined representative of an extra cost for destination error associated with processing an item if it is delivered by an erroneous delivery office, a second item of numerical information (C_2) is defined representative of an extra cost of destination error associated with processing an item if it is delivered in an erroneous delivery round, and a third item of numerical information (C_3) is defined representative of an extra cost of destination error associated with processing an item if it is delivered to an erroneous delivery point, and in which in order to seek the solution that minimizes the extra cost of destination error, a comparison (301, 303) is made for each

current solution for the destination address between the delivery office and/or the delivery round, and/or the delivery point identified for said solution with the delivery office, the delivery round, and the delivery point identified for each of the other destination address solutions so as to obtain for said current destination address solution an accumulated value of extra costs of destination error calculated on the basis of said first, second, and third items of numerical information.

6. (Original) A system for processing postal items, the system comprising a camera for forming an image of each item, the image including address information (1), and a data processor unit that performs automatic recognition of destination address information by OCR (8, 9) on the basis of the image of the item and a reference address base (6), the system being characterized in that it further comprises a database (11) having organized therein ordered lists of delivery points for delivery rounds, and in that the processor unit is arranged in such a manner that during automatic recognition of destination address information, it makes use (10) of said database (11) in such a manner as to take account of an estimated extra cost of destination error associated with processing the item should it be delivered to an erroneous delivery point.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, in which the processor unit is arranged in such a manner that in order to take account of the extra cost of destination error, it groups together a set of destination address solutions for the item, it identifies the delivery point corresponding respectively to said solutions (100), and it seeks to discover whether the identified destination points all form part of a single delivery round (101).

8. (Original) The system of claim 7, in which the processor unit is arranged in such a manner that in order to take account of the extra cost of destination error, in the event of all the identified delivery points being part of a single delivery round, it determines a volume of mail in the delivery range corresponding to the delivery points identified for said delivery round.

9. (Original) The system of claim 6, in which the processor unit is arranged in such a manner that in order to take account of the extra cost of destination error it groups together a set of destination address solutions for the item, it identifies the delivery points corresponding respectively to said solutions, it identifies the delivery round corresponding respectively to said delivery points, and it identifies the delivery offices corresponding respectively to said delivery round, and on the basis of the delivery point, the delivery round, and the delivery offices as identified, it searches (102) the destination address solutions for the solution that minimizes the extra cost of destination error associated with processing the item should it be delivered by an erroneous delivery office, and/or in an erroneous delivery round, and/or to an erroneous delivery point.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9, in which there are recorded a first item of numerical information (C_1) representative of the extra cost of destination error associated with processing an item if it is delivered to an erroneous delivery office, a second item of numerical information (C_2) representative of the extra cost of destination error associated with the processing of an item if it is delivered in an erroneous delivery round, and a third item of numerical information (C_3) representative of the extra cost of destination error associated with

processing an item if it is delivered to an erroneous delivery point, and in which in order to seek the solution that minimizes the extra cost of destination error, the processing unit is arranged in such a manner as to compared (301, 303) for each current destination address solution the delivery office and/or the delivery round and/or the delivery point identified for said solution with the delivery office, the delivery round , and the delivery point identified for each of the other destination address solutions in such a manner as to obtain for said current destination address solution an accumulated value of extra cost of destination error as calculated on the basis of said first, second, and third items of numerical information

11. (Currently Amended) A postal sorting machine including a system for processing mail items according to ~~any one of claims 6 to 10~~ claim 6.